Saint Paul Planning Commission City Hall Conference Center 15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Minutes January 7, 2011

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, January 7, 2011, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners

Mmes. Halverson, Merrigan, Thao, Wang, Wencl; and

Present:

Messrs. Alton, Commers, Connolly, Fernandez, Gelgelu, Kramer, Nelson,

Schertler, Spaulding, Ward, and Wickiser.

Commissioners

Mmes. *Donnelly-Cohen, *Porter, and *Young.

Absent:

*Excused

Also Present:

Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Patricia James, Allan Torstenson, Luis Pereira, Christina Morrison, Josh Williams, Anton Jerve, Jessica Rosenfeld, Emily Goodman, Colleen O'Dell, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and

Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes December 3rd and December 17, 2011.

MOTION: Commissioner Alton moved approval of the minutes of December 3, 2010. Commissioner Wickiser seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Thao moved approval of the minutes of December 17, 2010. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

II. Chair's Announcements

Commissioner Kramer read a resolution thanking Chair Donnelly-Cohen for her service on the Planning Commission.

MOTION: Commissioner Kramer moved approval of the resolution honoring Chair Donnelly-Cohen. Commissioner Alton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Acting Chair Commers read a resolution thanking Commissioner Alton for his service on the Planning Commission.

MOTION: Commissioner Commers moved approval of the resolution honoring Commissioner Alton. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond said that four new planning commissioners will be sworn in at the January 21st meeting, and that two were present today in the audience - Trevor Oliver, an attorney with Kelly and Lemmons, and Christopher Ochs, who has a background in Landscape Architecture. The other two people who will be joining the commission are: Julie Perrus, an attorney with Larkin, Hoffman, Daly and Lindgren, and Elizabeth Reveal, who is retired but has a very lengthy and outstanding career of public service. There will be an orientation for the new commissioners next Friday, January 14, 2011 from 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. in room 41 of City Hall, and any of the current commissioners who are interested are welcome to attend.

IV. Zoning Committee

STAFF SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

None.

NEW BUSINESS

#10-932-130 Hamline University (University Center) – Modification of building setback standard for colleges in residential districts and variance of off-street loading/unloading standards to allow maneuvering in public right-of-way. 774 Snelling Avenue North, NE corner of Snelling at Englewood. (Josh Williams, 651/266-6659)

Commissioner Kramer explained that the main issue the committee discussed was the off-street parking and loading issue. The new construction replaces an existing loading area now located next door. The off-street loading area will only be used once a day six days of the week in the morning hours. Based on the testimony and site plan the committee concluded that it was an appropriate variance and modification for the project. The long term master plan for the campus anticipates further redevelopment that may result in a closure of Englewood, which would make the on-street loading issue much less significant.

Commissioner Spaulding asked Commissioner Nelson to address his vote against the application.

Commissioner Nelson said that there were several concerns he had, including that the truck movements take up a lot of the street. In his opinion, this loading dock is not similar to what Hamline already has in place, which is nonconforming. Directly adjacent to this loading dock is the sole entrance and exit from a 110 car parking garage. And it is also twice as close to the intersection of Snelling as the old loading dock, and is in a more congested area - across the street from a Super America gas station. He was also concerned that the site plan associated with the variance in no way recognizes the fact that, according to the master plan, Sorin Hall will be demolished. They are utilizing the street as though it were vacated without actually having that in place. He stated that in his opinion it would have taken very little change in the site plan to meet the requirements without a variance.

Commissioner Connolly asked if this situation is in any way analogous to Macalester Center on Grand and Snelling, where the loading dock is actually on Snelling, and is that situation working or not working.

Josh Williams, PED staff, said that he has not heard one way or the other whether the Macalester loading dock is problematic. That project did not go through the same review because it did not require a conditional use permit or a variance to his knowledge.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the modification of building setback standard and variance subject to additional conditions. The motion carried 15-1 (Nelson) on a voice vote.

Commissioner Kramer announced the items on the agenda for the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, January 13, 2011.

Commissioner Merrigan stated that, regarding the previous case, she had asked whether a TDM plan was prepared. Mr. Williams had told her that there is a separate parking requirement for colleges and universities. Commissioner Merrigan suggested that staff review the parking regulations for colleges and universities when they add a significant amount of parking and include some kind of requirement for a TDM plan. The impact on traffic is potentially high, and that should be considered as part of the discussion.

Josh Williams, PED staff, added that typically a Transit Demand Management Plan (TDM) is required when over 100 parking spaces are added, but that is usually a discrete facility such as a business or retail development. In the case of a college, one building on the campus cannot be considered separate from the rest of the campus because that is not how a campus functions. The larger question is whether we should have a TDM plan requirement for colleges and universities.

Commissioner Kramer said the case that the committee had before it was the modification of the setback and variance for maneuvering. The Committee talked about a TDM plan and its relevance, but there was not an application for that before the Committee.

Patricia. James, PED staff, stated that it might be a good idea to revisit the college parking issue and look at alternatives that colleges may put in place to lessen the number of cars that are required to be accommodated on their campuses.

Acting Chair Commers agreed that Commissioner Merrigan's point was a good one and suggested further discussion about how to address this on a policy level in the future.

V. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Acting Chair Commers said that the committee would be meeting Jan. 11th and 18th to consider the testimony received in the hearings on November 19th and December 3rd for the Central Corridor Zoning Study.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, said staff is hoping that the committee can meet three weeks in a row. The meeting January 11th will focus on potential changes to the zoning map.

VI. Neighborhood Planning Committee

St. Anthony Park Como 2030 Plan and Zoning Study – Approve resolution recommending to the Mayor and City Council adoption of the plan and approval of the proposed property rezonings. (Allan Torstenson, 651/266-6579 and Colleen O'Dell, 651/266-6708)

Commissioner Nelson thanked the committee and everyone for their diligence on this. He was vice chair for the small area plan and the neighborhood has been looking forward to having this passed for awhile. They look forward to an affirmative vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Wencl moved on behalf of the Neighborhood Planning Committee to approve the resolution recommending that the St. Anthony Park Como 2030 Plan and Zoning Study be adopted by the Mayor and City Council. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Commissioner Wencl announced the next Neighborhood Committee meeting on Wednesday, January 12th has been cancelled.

VII. <u>U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey</u> – Informational presentation by Jess Rosenfeld, Planning staff. (*Jessica Rosenfeld*, 651/266-6560)

Jessica Rosenfeld, PED staff, gave an informational presentation about the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is a yearly survey, sent out for the first time in 2000, which is sent to 2 million households every year, and the results are estimates with margin of error. The ACS replaces the long form of the decennial census, and is the U.S. Census Bureau's attempt to gather demographic information more frequently, but from a smaller group of people. Initially, one-year estimates were only available for areas with populations of 65,000 or greater. With every new survey there is more data that can be used to make estimates for smaller and smaller geographic areas. The most recent ACS is exciting for us because the new five-year (2005-2009) estimates are available at the Census tract level for the first time. The ACS covers a huge amount of information. It's an 11-page survey that asks about age, race, ethnicity, income, education, commuting habits, ancestry, housing facilities, etc.

Saint Paul's 2005-2009 estimated population is about 280,000 which is down a little from 2000 when it was 287,000. It is an estimate, however, and we will have to wait for 2010 Census information for real numbers.

Ms. Rosenfeld showed tables comparing selected data for Saint Paul, Minneapolis, Roseville, Maplewood and Bloomington. Saint Paul has the lowest median age and is the most diverse. Saint Paul's households are wealthier then Minneapolis, but not well off as Bloomington. Saint Paul has the most non-family households and the highest percentage of people with less than a ninth-grade education. Saint Paul has the highest foreign-born population and the highest percentage of households that speak a language other than English. Saint Paul has the lowest median housing value and the highest number of households paying a high percentage of their income toward rent.

Ms. Rosenfeld showed how to access ACS data from the American Factfinder web site (http://factfinder.census.gov) and the Metropolitan Council's Community Profiles page (http://stats.metc.state.mn.us/profile/), and how to display ACS data in maps on the NY Times

(http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/explorer) and Social Explorer (http://www.socialexplorer.com/pub/maps/home.aspx) Web sites. She also distributed a sheet with selected 2005-2009 American Community Survey data for Saint Paul, Downtown and other metro-area cities.

Commissioner Schertler stated that it would be interesting to use data to research where in the past we have made assumptions that growth would occur because we made infrastructure improvements or assumptions about what people are going to do.

Ms. Rosenfeld said that we have had the opportunity in doing the Comprehensive Plan to try and connect demographic trends and future land use decisions to some extent. The ACS data presents a great opportunity for further research and analysis, but it is hard to find exactly what you want if you do not know what you are looking for.

VIII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Spaulding said the next meeting on Monday, January 10th has been cancelled.

IX. Communications Committee

Commissioner Thao announced that immediately after the Planning Commission meeting today the Communications Committee will meet here in this same room.

X. Task Force Reports

Commissioner Wickiser reported that the Cesar Chavez Small Area Plan Task Force has been meeting and there are going to be three public meetings coming up. There are a lot of interesting dynamics regarding the three sites that they are talking about. They have been meeting for about six months now and have not given a specific report as of yet, but there will be much to report in the coming months.

Commissioner Spaulding announced that there is a public hearing on Red Rock Station Area Planning next Thursday, at 6:30 p.m. at the Battle Creek Recreation Center to discuss Lower Afton.

Commissioner Spaulding also announced that the Nominating Committee has recommended four commissioners for the Planning Commission leadership positions and they are: Jon Commers, Chair; Barbara A. Wencl, First Vice Chair; Paula Merrigan, Second Vice Chair; and Anthony Fernandez, Secretary.

XI. Old Business

None.

XII. New Business

None.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:42 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary Planning and Economic Development Department, City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Drummond Planning Director Approved January 21, 2011

(Date)

Marilyn Porter

Secretary of the Planning Commission

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